



A LASTING LEGACY

Paintings and Sculptures
from the Paul Mellon Collection

NATIONAL GALLERY OF ART



NATIONAL GALLERY
OF ART | USA
75 YEARS



Art has brought so much pleasure to my own life.
It seems to me that the best I can do, or hope to do,
is expand the opportunities for others to enjoy the arts.

PAUL MELLON, 1982

A LASTING LEGACY

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Mary Cassatt, *Little Girl in a Blue Armchair*, 1878,
oil on canvas, National Gallery of Art, Washington,
Collection of Mr. and Mrs. Paul Mellon

PAUL MELLON (1907–1999) donated more than one thousand works of art to the National Gallery of Art. Enduring reminders of his generosity, these gifts are but one aspect of the philanthropist’s many contributions to the Gallery, which his father, Andrew W. Mellon (1855 –1937), founded in 1937. Paul Mellon provided both visionary leadership and financial support, serving as a trustee for nearly fifty years (including as the first president of the board), overseeing the design of the East Building, and funding its construction with his sister, Ailsa Mellon Bruce, and the Andrew W. Mellon Foundation. His devotion to the Gallery as the nation’s artistic standard-bearer assured its position among the world’s great art museums.

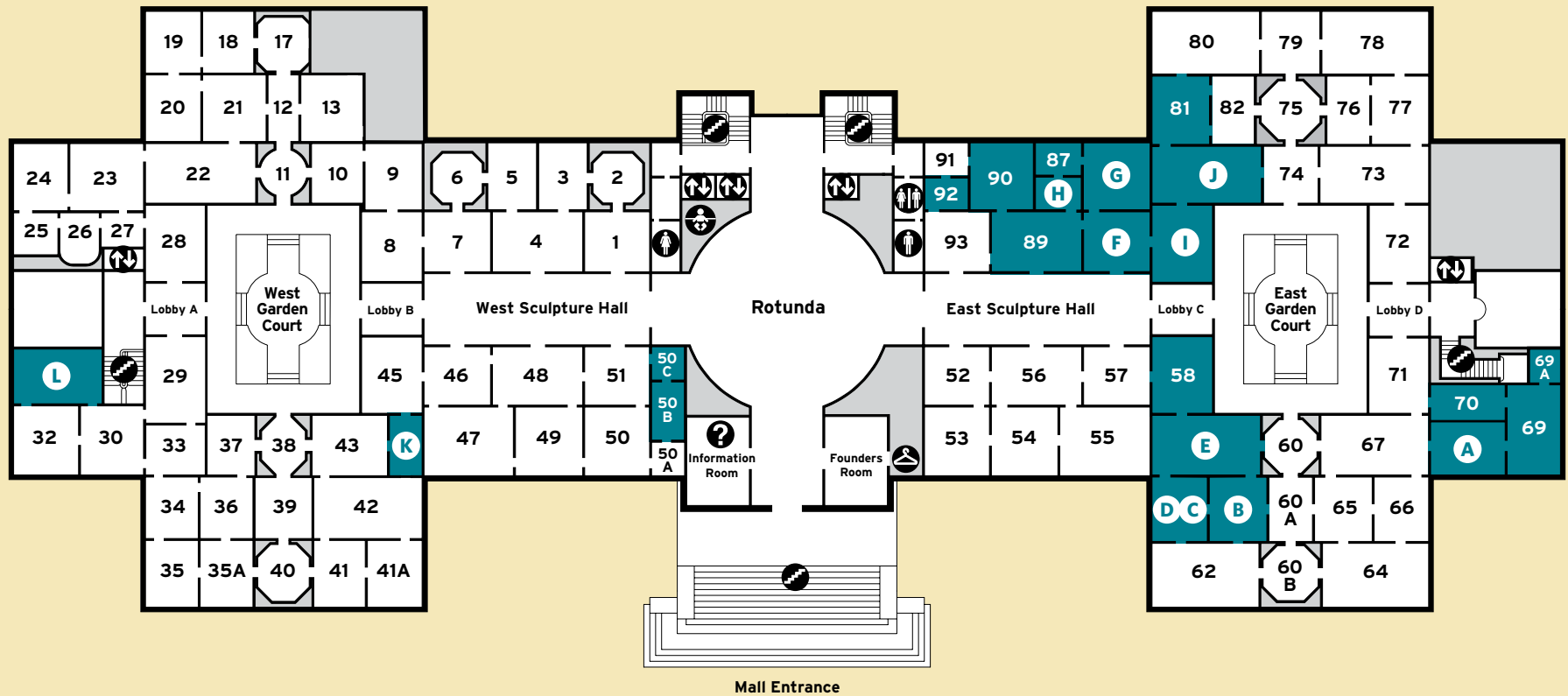
A passionate and discerning collector, Mellon expressed his desire never to acquire art that he “would not want to live with or see constantly.” He built much of his collection in concert with his wife, Rachel “Bunny” Mellon (1910 – 2014), and his donations of works by renowned masters of American, British, and continental European art, together with additional gifts from his sister, Ailsa, made an indelible mark on the institution.

WEST BUILDING MAIN FLOOR

The areas shaded in color on the Main Floor map below and Ground Floor map on pages 14 - 15 indicate galleries that contain works given to the Gallery by Paul Mellon.

The circled letters mark a walking tour of selected paintings and sculptures donated by Paul Mellon, which are described on the following pages.

Visit our online tour:
www.nga.gov/paulmellongifts



Please note that the permanent collection display occasionally changes, so some works of art may be temporarily off view.



A

Winslow Homer, *Dad's Coming!*, 1873, oil on wood, National Gallery of Art, Washington, Collection of Mr. and Mrs. Paul Mellon [GALLERY 68](#)

A significant number of the Gallery's drawings, paintings, and prints by Winslow Homer are gifts from Paul Mellon. Here, the artist painted mother and son awaiting the return of a fishing boat in Gloucester, Massachusetts, during a summer when the town experienced a number of tragedies at sea. Homer's choice of subject — the watching, waiting family — evokes a meditative mood.



B

George Catlin, *The White Cloud, Head Chief of the Iowas*, 1844/1845, oil on canvas, National Gallery of Art, Washington, Paul Mellon Collection [GALLERY 63](#)

Catlin painted Mu-hu-she-kaw, or The White Cloud, in Europe. He had joined Catlin on tour to promote the artist's "Indian Gallery" — a collection of more than five hundred paintings of American Indians. In 1965 Paul Mellon gave 351 of Catlin's paintings to the Gallery, where they became the core of the National Lending Service, a program established to make the collections of the National Gallery of Art accessible to museums throughout the country.



C

Joseph Wright, *The Corinthian Maid*, 1782 - 1784, oil on canvas, National Gallery of Art, Washington, Paul Mellon Collection [GALLERY 61](#)

Fascinated with British life and history from a young age, Paul Mellon built an extensive collection of English art. This scene illustrates the ancient story of the origin of relief sculpture: after a young woman traced the shadow of her lover's face on the wall, her father, a potter, modeled the drawing in clay and baked it in his kiln. The painting was commissioned by the English potter Josiah Wedgwood, who founded the porcelain and fine china company of the same name.



D

George Stubbs, *White Poodle in a Punt*, c. 1780, oil on canvas, National Gallery of Art, Washington, Paul Mellon Collection [GALLERY 61](#)

Mellon expressed a particular fondness for paintings that captured the English landscape, country life, and sports — all of which are featured in this portrait of a poodle. English hunters of the eighteenth century favored the breed for the retrieval of waterfowl. Renowned for his depictions of animals, Stubbs was one of Mellon's favorite painters.



E

Benjamin Marshall, *J. G. Shaddick, the Celebrated Sportsman*, 1806, oil on canvas, National Gallery of Art, Washington, Paul Mellon Collection [GALLERY 59](#)

Flanked by his horse and hunting dogs, and holding up a pheasant in triumph, the subject of this portrait is the ultimate sportsman on a successful hunt. Like so many of the works Paul Mellon collected, this painting hung in his home — a tribute to his own love of horses and country sport.



F

Claude Monet, *Woman with a Parasol — Madame Monet and Her Son*, 1875, oil on canvas, National Gallery of Art, Washington, Collection of Mr. and Mrs. Paul Mellon [GALLERY 85](#)

“Bunny and I — and I think I can also speak for my sister, Ailsa Mellon Bruce — have always loved the out-of-doors. Perhaps this explains our affinity for the impressionists. For never before or since in the unfolding pageant of art have painters so brilliantly captured the poetry of the countryside.” — Paul Mellon, 1967



G

Mary Cassatt, *Little Girl in a Blue Armchair*, 1878, oil on canvas, National Gallery of Art, Washington, Collection of Mr. and Mrs. Paul Mellon [GALLERY 86](#)

Paul and Bunny Mellon acquired many works by impressionist painters, whose interest in depicting everyday scenes of domestic life is exemplified in this painting of a young girl slouched in an armchair. With its loose brushstrokes and limited palette, it marks the point at which Cassatt, an American who lived in Paris for more than four decades, adopted the techniques of her French counterparts.



H

Georges Seurat, *The Lighthouse at Honfleur*, 1886, oil on canvas, National Gallery of Art, Washington, Collection of Mr. and Mrs. Paul Mellon [GALLERY 88](#)

Thanks largely to Paul Mellon’s generosity, the Gallery has one of the most significant collections of works by Seurat in America. Seurat based his distinctive technique of painting with dots of color, or pointillism, on new theories about the optical characteristics of light and color. The technique enabled Seurat to record appearances more accurately while preserving the fresh, natural qualities he admired in impressionist works.



I

Paul Cézanne, *Boy in a Red Waistcoat*, 1888 - 1890, oil on canvas, National Gallery of Art, Washington, Collection of Mr. and Mrs. Paul Mellon, in Honor of the 50th Anniversary of the National Gallery of Art [GALLERY 84](#)

This iconic painting draws on art historical precedent in the pose of the boy and the background curtain, which evoke Italian portraiture of the sixteenth century; at the same time, the flattened space and arrangements of color and shape anticipate abstraction, a concept more fully explored by artists in the twentieth century.



J

Vincent van Gogh, *Still Life of Oranges and Lemons with Blue Gloves*, 1889, National Gallery of Art, Washington, Collection of Mr. and Mrs. Paul Mellon [GALLERY 83](#)

With its reference to pruning and fruit gathering, this painting was likely a favorite of Bunny Mellon, an ardent horticulturalist, landscape designer, and collector of rare garden books. Although her husband bequeathed the painting to the Gallery in 1999, she lived with it until her own death in March 2014.



K

Jan Brueghel the Elder, *Flowers in a Basket and a Vase*, 1615, oil on panel, National Gallery of Art, Washington, Collection of Mrs. Paul Mellon, in Honor of the 50th Anniversary of the National Gallery of Art [GALLERY 44](#)

Brueghel's still life is the first picture by this important Flemish master to enter the collection. The artist was a specialist in painting flowers and traveled to distant cities in search of rare and unusual blossoms. Bunny Mellon, a passionate gardener, would have especially appreciated this arrangement of delicate flowers gathered in a basket and the Venetian glass vase beside it.

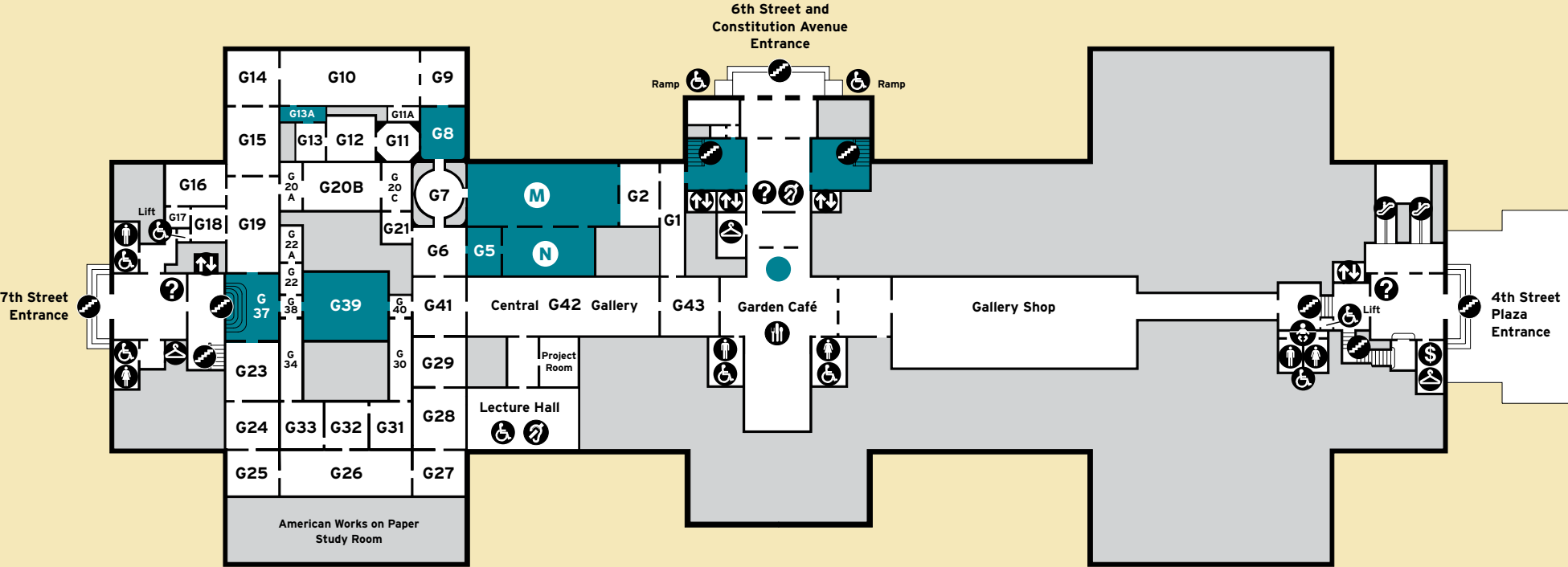


L

Canaletto, *English Landscape Capriccio with a Column*, c. 1754, oil on canvas, National Gallery of Art, Washington, Paul Mellon Collection [GALLERY 31](#)

In 1746 Canaletto's great popularity with English tourists and patrons brought the Venetian artist to England, where he painted this canvas and its companion almost a decade later. The fanciful composition, called a capriccio, combines Italian architectural motifs in scenery reminiscent of the English countryside. Among the first gifts Paul Mellon donated to the Gallery, it hung in the American Embassy in London as part of a long-term loan in the 1960s and 1970s.

WEST BUILDING GROUND FLOOR



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DEGAS WAXES



Though untrained as a sculptor, Edgar Degas spent decades modeling studies in wax, clay, and mixed media. The dozens of small sculptures discovered in his studio after his death are testaments to his interest in the body in motion — both human and equine — a subject he also explored in his paintings, pastels, and prints. Upon seeing nearly seventy of Degas's sculptures during a visit to a dealer in 1955, Paul Mellon reflected, “the overall effect . . . was overpowering, and one could feel the grace, the tension, and the movement of the dancers and the horses.” Recognizing his occasional role as a “collector of collections,” he purchased the entire group and donated the majority of the works to the Gallery, the largest repository of Degas's original wax sculptures anywhere.



M

Edgar Degas, *Little Dancer Aged Fourteen*, 1878–1881, pigmented beeswax and clay over metal armature with human hair and silk, linen, and cotton garments, National Gallery of Art, Washington, Collection of Mr. and Mrs. Paul Mellon [GALLERY G3](#)

Highly naturalistic in style and laboriously perfected over three years, *Little Dancer* was the only sculpture Degas exhibited publicly. At least thirty bronze and two plaster casts were made after his death based on this original wax-and-clay sculpture, the sole version the artist ever touched.



N

Edgar Degas, *Horse Rearing*, 1880s, pigmented beeswax and plastiline over metal armature, National Gallery of Art, Washington, Collection of Mr. and Mrs. Paul Mellon [GALLERY G4](#)

Horses, like dancers, were attractive subjects for Degas because of their balanced, disciplined movement. An avid horse racer and breeder, Mellon shared Degas's love of the animal, depicted in many works of art in the Mellon collection.

As we look to the future, I hope that you will consider
the National Gallery as your gallery,
for as Americans, its collections and resources
belong to each of you.

PAUL MELLON, 1983

cover: Details of Claude Monet, *Woman with a Parasol — Madame Monet and Her Son*, 1875 (front), and Vincent van Gogh, *Still Life of Oranges and Lemons with Blue Gloves*, 1889 (back), Collection of Mr. and Mrs. Paul Mellon. page 4: Paul Mellon in front of a 1924 portrait of his father, Andrew W. Mellon, by Sir William Orpen. Photograph by Henry Groskinsky. National Gallery of Art, Gallery Archives

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